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Publication date:
2013

Document version
Submitted manuscript

Citation for published version (APA):
Javakhishvili Larsen, N. (2013). Theoretical discussion on “periphery” in the European cross-border perspective.

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Download date: 19. Apr. 2017

Theoretical discussion on “periphery” in the European cross-border perspective

Nino Javakhishvili Larsen

Abstract.

Human geographers and economists have been widely discussing the “Core-Periphery” theme throughout some decades. They have defined and re-defined this concept many times and have integrated within conceptual and econometric models. Theoretical understanding of the concept “core-periphery” has changed along with the economic development of spaces (regions, cities, nations). Taking departure from the traditional industrial location theories, central place theories (Christaller, Lösch) and later on the New Economic Geography models (Krugman), prove that there is the continues search to re-define this concept.

John Friedmann in the 1960s elaborated the development stages of regions. In his model, he argued that there is a purpose why some regions develop into the centres and some into the peripheries. Friedmann’s core-periphery model suggests that each stage reflects the change of economic relationship between the core and periphery. In the final stage of economic development of spaces, Friedmann identifies four types of areas. Core regions – that have urban and industrial concentration; upward transition regions – the peripheries that have high trickle-down effect from the core and rapid economic growth; resource frontier regions – part of the periphery that are developing; downward transition regions – that have stagnant or declining economies with exhausted resources. (Friedmann, 1966)ⁱ

The regions, previously core, can become periphery and vice versa, due to the economic growth and reorganisation of the activities in space. Realizing the relevance of spatial aspects in the socio-economic development and planning draws attention to the theoretical contribution from time to time. “At the grand level, the uneven development of whole regions can be driven by cumulative processes that have increasing returns at their root,” writes Paul Krugman (1991a)ⁱⁱ. Krugman is one of the economists that acknowledge the importance of location within the economic growth and opens up the discussion of core-periphery. Krugman defines the centripetal and centrifugal forces that affect the geographical location of production. (1991b)ⁱⁱⁱ

This paper serves as a theoretical review regarding the development of the “core-periphery” discourse among economic and geography disciplines. The paper aims to find the cord between the definitions and postulate some aspects for centre-periphery patterns within the modern European cross-border regional perspective.

ⁱ Friedmann, J. (1966) *Regional Development Policy: A Case Study of Venezuela*. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge

ⁱⁱ Krugman, P. (1991a) *Geography and Trade*. The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge

ⁱⁱⁱ Krugman, P. (1991b) Increasing Returns and Economic Geography. *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 99, No. 3